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Information and communications technologies for development

Report of the Second Committee

Rapporteur: Ms. Aida **Hodžić** (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2012, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixty-seventh session the item entitled "Information and communications technologies for development" and to allocate it to the Second Committee.

2. The Second Committee considered the item at its 26th to 29th, 34th and 36th meetings, on 9, 12, 13 and 15 November and 7 and 12 December 2012. An account of the Committee's discussion of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/67/SR.26-29, 34 and 36). Attention is also drawn to the general debate held by the Committee at its 2nd to 6th meetings, from 8 to 10 October (see A/C.2/67/SR.2-6).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum (A/67/65-E/2012/48 and Corr.1);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels (A/67/66-E/2012/49 and Add.1);

(c) Note by the Secretary-General on communication for development programmes in the United Nations system (A/67/207).

4. At the 26th meeting, on 9 November, introductory statements were made by the Chief of the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the Senior Public Information and Liaison Officer

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of the New York Office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (see A/C.2/67/SR.26).

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolutions A/C.2/67/L.35 and Rev.1

5. At the 28th meeting, on 13 November, the representative of Azerbaijan, on behalf of Australia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Georgia, Israel, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Uzbekistan, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Building connectivity through the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway" (A/C.2/67/L.35), which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolution 64/186 of 21 December 2009,

"*Recalling also* the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003, and endorsed by the General Assembly, and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005, and endorsed by the General Assembly,

"*Recalling further* the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

"*Stressing* the need to reduce the digital divide and to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, are available to all, and welcoming, in this regard, the Connect the Commonwealth of Independent States summit held in Minsk in 2009 as a regional initiative aimed at mobilizing human, financial and technical resources to accelerate the implementation of the connectivity goals of the World Summit on the Information Society,

"*Noting* that Governments, as well as the private sector, civil society and the United Nations, and other international organizations, have an important role in bridging the digital divide for the benefit of all and in building an inclusive and people-centred information society,

"*Recognizing* that well-developed information and communication network infrastructures, such as information superhighways, act as one of the main technological enablers of the digital opportunities, and noting, in this regard, the Regional Ministerial Meeting on the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway convened by the Government of Azerbaijan in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, held in Baku on 11 November 2008,

"*Noting* the establishment of the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway project secretariat in 2011, headquartered in Baku, and the work undertaken by the secretariat so far,

"1. *Recognizes* that information and communication technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster economic growth,

competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will help to expedite the integration of all countries, particularly developing countries, into the global economy;

"2. *Also recognizes* the immense potential that building connectivity can have in contributing to social progress, including in advancing the status of women and promoting social integration and tolerance;

"3. *Stresses* the importance of strengthened and continued cooperation among all stakeholders to build and run information infrastructures to bridge the digital divide in the region, and encourages interested Member States to participate in the development of regional connectivity solutions;

"4. *Recognizes* the need to build connectivity in the region to help to bridge the digital divide, and in this regard welcomes the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway project and the support provided by the intended participants;

"5. *Encourages* the international community to support improved global telecommunications connectivity, with a focus on Eurasian countries with inadequate access to the international information and communications technology backbone, through participation in the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway project;

"6. *Recognizes* the importance of the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway project in diversifying and improving telecommunications transit routes between Asia and Europe, and in this regard invites Member States to further support the project by encouraging, as appropriate, the participation of the public and private sectors;

"7. *Welcomes* the proposal to establish the Eurasian Connectivity Alliance, coordinated by the International Telecommunications Union, aimed at realizing the synergies among Governments, the private sector and international development institutions with a view to improving the regional information and communications technology infrastructure."

6. At its 34th meeting, on 7 December, the Committee had before it a revised draft resolution entitled "Building connectivity through the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway" (A/C.2/67/L.35/Rev.1), submitted by Australia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Georgia, Iraq, Israel, Kazakhstan, Morocco, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Subsequently, Afghanistan, Canada, Gabon, Guatemala, India, Japan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

7. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed that draft resolution A/C.2/67/L.35/Rev.1 had no programme budget implications.

8. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of Azerbaijan, in the course of which he orally corrected the draft resolution (see A/C.2/67/SR.34).

9. Also at its 34th meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/67/L.35/Rev.1, as orally corrected (see para. 20, draft resolution I).

10. After the adoption of the draft resolution, a statement was made by the representative of Armenia (see A/C.2/67/SR.34).

B. Draft resolutions A/C.2/67/L.36 and A/C.2/67/L.61

11. At the 29th meeting, on 15 November, the representative of Algeria, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Information and communications technologies for development" (A/C.2/67/L.36), which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolutions 56/183 of 21 December 2001, 57/238 of 20 December 2002, 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, 59/220 of 22 December 2004, 60/252 of 27 March 2006, 62/182 of 19 December 2007, 63/202 of 19 December 2008, 64/187 of 21 December 2009, 65/141 of 20 December 2010 and 66/184 of 22 December 2011 and other relevant resolutions,

"*Recalling also* Economic and Social Council resolutions 2006/46 of 28 July 2006, 2008/3 of 18 July 2008, 2009/7 of 24 July 2009, 2010/2 of 19 July 2010 and 2011/16 of 26 July 2011, and taking note of Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/5 of 24 July 2012 on the assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society,

"*Recalling further* the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003, and endorsed by the General Assembly, and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005, and endorsed by the General Assembly,

"*Recalling* the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

"*Recalling also* the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals and its outcome document,

"*Recalling further* the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, and its outcome document, entitled 'The future we want',

"*Taking note* of the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels,

"*Noting* the organization of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2012 in Geneva from 14 to 18 May 2012,

"*Noting also* the establishment of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development at the invitation of the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union and the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, taking note of the 'Broadband targets for 2015', which set targets for making broadband policy universal and for increasing affordability and uptake in support of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and acknowledging the report of the Broadband

Commission, entitled 'The state of broadband 2012: achieving digital inclusion for all', which provides the first-ever country-by-country evaluation of those targets and the state of broadband deployment worldwide,

"*Recognizing* the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in assisting the Economic and Social Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up, in particular the review and assessment of the progress made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, while at the same time maintaining its original mandate on science and technology for development,

"*Noting* the holding of the fifteenth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in Geneva from 21 to 25 May 2012,

"*Noting also* that cultural diversity is the common heritage of humankind and that the information society should be founded on and stimulate respect for cultural identity, cultural and linguistic diversity, traditions and religions and foster dialogue among cultures and civilizations, and noting also that the promotion, affirmation and preservation of diverse cultural identities and languages, as reflected in relevant agreed United Nations documents, including the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, will further enrich the information society,

"*Acknowledging* the positive trends in global connectivity and affordability in the field of information and communications technologies, in particular the steady increase in Internet access to one third of the world's population, the rapid diffusion of mobile telephony, the increased availability of multilingual content and Internet addresses and the advent of new services and applications, including m-health, mobile transactions, e-government, e-education, e-business and developmental services, which offer great potential for the development of the information society,

"*Emphasizing*, however, that in spite of recent progress, there remains an important digital divide, recognizing in this regard that currently only 26 per cent of the population in developing countries uses the Internet, compared with 74 per cent in developed countries, and stressing the need to reduce the digital divide, including with regard to such issues as international interconnection charges for Internet use, and to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies, are available to all,

"*Reaffirming* the need to harness the potential of information and communications technologies to promote the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, through sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development,

"*Expressing concern* about the adverse impacts of the ongoing world financial and economic crisis on the positive trends in the diffusion of information and communications technologies and the investment needed to ensure universal access to such technologies,

"*Expressing concern also* about the growing gap in broadband provision between developed and developing countries, as well as about the new dimensions that the digital divide has taken on,

"*Recognizing* that the lack of capacity-building for the productive use of information and communications technologies needs to be addressed in order to overcome the digital divide,

"*Recognizing also* that the number of Internet users is growing and that the digital divide is also changing in character from one based on whether access is available to one based on the quality of access, information and skills that users can obtain, and the value they can derive from it, and recognizing in this regard that there is a need to prioritize the use of information and communications technologies through innovative approaches, including multi-stakeholder approaches, within national and regional development strategies,

"*Reaffirming* paragraphs 4, 5 and 55 of the Declaration of Principles adopted in Geneva in 2003, and recognizing that freedom of expression and the free flow of information, ideas and knowledge are essential for the information society and are beneficial to development,

"*Conscious* of the challenges faced by States, in particular developing countries, in combating cybercrime, and emphasizing the need to reinforce technical assistance and capacity-building activities for the prevention, prosecution and punishment of the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes,

"*Acknowledging* that the Internet is a central element of the infrastructure of the information society and is a global facility available to the public,

"*Recognizing* that the international management of the Internet should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement of Governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations, as stated in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society,

"*Recognizing also* the importance of the Internet Governance Forum and its mandate as a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue on various matters, including public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance, in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet, as well as its role in building partnerships among different stakeholders so as to help in addressing the various issues of Internet governance, while acknowledging the calls for improvements in its working methods,

"*Recalling* its decision that the desirability of the continuation of the Internet Governance Forum will be considered again by Member States in the General Assembly in the context of a ten-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2015,

"*Reiterating* the significance and urgency of the process towards enhanced cooperation in full consistency with the mandate provided in the Tunis Agenda and the need for enhanced cooperation to enable Governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities in respect of international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, but not in respect

of the day-to-day technical and operational matters that have no impact on those issues,

"*Noting* the holding of the open consultations on enhanced cooperation on public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, convened by the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in Geneva on 18 May 2012,

"*Reaffirming* that the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society related to Internet governance, namely, the process towards enhanced cooperation and the convening of the Internet Governance Forum, are to be pursued by the Secretary-General through two distinct processes, and recognizing that the two processes may be complementary,

"*Reaffirming also* paragraphs 35 to 37 and 67 to 72 of the Tunis Agenda,

"*Welcoming* the efforts undertaken by the host countries in organizing the meetings of the Internet Governance Forum, held in Athens, in 2006, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2007, in Hyderabad, India, in 2008, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2009, in Vilnius, in 2010, in Nairobi, in 2011 and in Baku, in 2012,

"*Recognizing* the pivotal role of the United Nations system in promoting development, including with respect to enhancing access to information and communications technologies, inter alia, through partnerships with all relevant stakeholders,

"*Emphasizing* the importance of launching a preparatory process for the review conference on the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society,

"*Welcoming*, in view of the existing gaps in information and communications technologies infrastructure, the Connect Africa summits held in Kigali in 2007 and in Cairo in 2008, the Connect the Commonwealth of Independent States summit held in Minsk in 2009, the meeting of Commonwealth countries held in Colombo in 2010, the first Digital Agenda Assembly of the European Union held in Brussels in 2011 and the annual European Dialogue on Internet Governance, which are regional initiatives aimed at mobilizing human, financial and technical resources to accelerate the implementation of the connectivity goals of the World Summit on the Information Society,

"1. *Recognizes* that information and communications technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will help to expedite the integration of all countries, especially developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, into the global economy;

"2. *Also recognizes* the rapid growth in broadband access networks, especially in developed countries, and expresses concern about the growing digital divide in the availability, affordability, quality of access and use of broadband between high-income countries and other regions, with the least developed countries, and Africa, as a continent, lagging behind the rest of the world;

"3. *Expresses concern* regarding the digital divide in access to information and communications technologies and broadband connectivity between countries at different levels of development, which affects many economically and socially relevant applications in such areas as government, business, health and education, and also expresses concern with regard to the special challenges faced in the area of broadband connectivity by developing countries, including the least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries;

"4. *Acknowledges* that a gender divide exists as part of the digital divide, and encourages all stakeholders to ensure the full participation of women in the information society and women's access to and use of information and communications technologies for their overall empowerment and benefit;

"5. *Stresses* that, for the majority of the poor, the development promise of science and technology, including information and communications technologies, remains unfulfilled, and emphasizes the need to effectively harness technology, including information and communications technologies, to bridge the digital divide;

"6. *Also stresses* the important role of Governments in the design of their national public policies and in the provision of public services responsive to national needs and priorities through, inter alia, the effective use of information and communications technologies, including on the basis of a multi-stakeholder approach, to support national development efforts;

"7. *Recognizes* that, in addition to financing by the public sector, financing of information and communications technologies infrastructure by the private sector has come to play an important role in many countries and that domestic financing is being augmented by North-South flows and complemented by South-South cooperation, and also recognizes that South-South and triangular cooperation can be useful tools for promoting the development of information and communications technologies;

"8. *Also recognizes* that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing the new technologies, such as insufficient resources, infrastructure, education, capacity, investment and connectivity and issues related to technology ownership, standards and flows, and in this regard calls upon all stakeholders to provide adequate resources, enhanced capacity-building and technology transfer, on mutually agreed terms, to developing countries, particularly the least developed countries;

"9. *Further recognizes* the immense potential that information and communications technologies have in promoting the transfer of technologies in a wide spectrum of socioeconomic activity;

"10. *Encourages* strengthened and continuing cooperation between and among stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit on the Information Society through, inter alia, the promotion of national, regional and international multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships, and the

promotion of national and regional multi-stakeholder thematic platforms in a joint effort and dialogue with developing countries, including the least developed countries, development partners and actors in the information and communications technologies sector;

"11. *Reaffirms* the role of the General Assembly in the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, to be held by the end of 2015, as recognized in paragraph 111 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society;

"12. *Decides* to hold, by 2015, the ten-year high-level review conference on the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, in accordance with paragraph 111 of the Tunis Agenda;

"13. *Also decides* that the preparations for the review conference shall take place through an open-ended intergovernmental preparatory committee, which will define the agenda of the conference, finalize the outcome document of the conference, and decide on the modalities for the participation of other stakeholders in the conference;

"14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a report on the preparatory process for the review conference, taking into consideration the work of the intergovernmental preparatory committee;

"15. *Welcomes* the efforts undertaken by Tunisia, host of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Telecommunication Union and other relevant international and regional organizations, for organizing annually the ICT 4 All Forum and technological exhibition as a platform within the framework of the follow-up to the Summit to promote a dynamic business environment for the information and communications technologies sector worldwide;

"16. *Notes* the progress that has been made by United Nations entities in cooperation with national Governments, regional commissions and other stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in the implementation of the action lines contained in the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society, and encourages the use of those action lines for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

"17. *Also notes* the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional level, facilitated by the regional commissions, as observed in the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit at the regional and international levels;

"18. *Encourages* the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, within their respective mandates and strategic plans, to contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, and emphasizes the importance of allocating new and additional resources in this regard;

"19. *Recognizes* the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology, and in this regard encourages the United Nations development

system to continue its effort to promote the use of information and communications technologies as a critical enabler of development and a catalyst for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

"20. *Also recognizes* the role of the United Nations Group on the Information Society as an inter-agency mechanism of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination designed to coordinate United Nations implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society;

"21. *Takes note* of the report of the Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum, and requests the Secretary-General to submit, as part of his annual reporting on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, information on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group, particularly on enhancing the participation of developing countries;

"22. *Stresses* the need for the enhanced participation of all developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in all Internet Governance Forum meetings, and in this regard invites Member States, as well as other stakeholders, to support the participation of Governments and all other stakeholders from developing countries in the Forum itself, as well as in the preparatory meetings;

"23. *Decides* to create a working group on enhanced cooperation, within the framework of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, to examine the mandate of the World Summit on the Information Society regarding enhanced cooperation, as contained in paragraphs 68 to 71 of the Tunis Agenda, and recommends necessary steps to operationalize it; the Working Group should submit its report to the Commission, at its seventeenth session, in 2014, as part of the preparations for the high-level review conference;

"24. *Also decides*, in that regard, that the membership of the working group shall comprise four members each from the five regional groups of the membership of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and four participants each, to be decided by the Commission, from the private sector, civil society, the technical and academic community and intergovernmental organizations;

"25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, through the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the Economic and Social Council, a report on the status of the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution, as part of his annual reporting on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels;

"26. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-eighth session the item entitled 'Information and communications technologies for development'."

12. At its 36th meeting, on 12 December, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "Information and communications technologies for development" (A/C.2/67/L.61), submitted by the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Modest Jonathan Mero (United Republic of Tanzania), on the basis of informal consultations on draft resolution A/C.2/67/L.36.

13. At the same meeting, on the proposal of the Chair, the Committee agreed to waive the relevant provisions of rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and to proceed to act on the draft resolution.

14. Also at the same meeting, the Committee was informed that draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.61 had no programme budget implications.

15. Also at the 36th meeting, a statement was made by the facilitator, Agnieszka Klausa (Poland), during which she orally corrected the draft resolution.

16. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/67/L.61, as orally corrected (see para. 20, draft resolution II).

17. After the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representatives of the European Union, Saudi Arabia, India and the United Republic of Tanzania (see A/C.2/67/SR.36).

18. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/67/L.61, draft resolution A/C.2/67/L.36 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

C. Draft decision proposed by the Chair

19. At its 36th meeting, on 12 December, on the proposal of the Chair, the Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, on communication for development programmes in the United Nations system (A/67/207) (see para. 21).

III. Recommendations of the Second Committee

20. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I
Building connectivity through the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 64/186 of 21 December 2009,

Recalling also the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003,[1] and endorsed by the General Assembly,[2] and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005,[3] and endorsed by the General Assembly,[4]

Recalling further the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[5]

Stressing the need to reduce the digital divide and to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies, are available to all, and welcoming in this regard the Connect the Commonwealth of Independent States summit, held in Minsk in 2009, as a regional initiative aimed at mobilizing human, financial and technical resources to accelerate the implementation of the connectivity goals of the World Summit on the Information Society,

Noting that Governments, as well as the private sector, civil society and the United Nations and other international organizations, have an important role in bridging the digital divide for the benefit of all and in building an inclusive and people-centred information society,

Noting also that information and communications technologies are facilitating the flow of information between Governments and the public and that, in this regard, it is essential to work towards improved access to such technologies, especially broadband networks and services, and to bridge the digital divide, recognizing the contribution of international cooperation in this regard,

Recognizing that well-developed information and communications network infrastructures, such as information superhighways, act as one of the main technological enablers of the digital opportunities, and noting in this regard the Regional Ministerial Meeting on the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway convened by the Government of Azerbaijan in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, held in Baku on 11 November 2008,

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[1] See A/C.2/59/3, annex.
[2] See resolution 59/220.
[3] See A/60/687.
[4] See resolution 60/252.
[5] See resolution 60/1.

Taking note of the establishment of the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway project secretariat in 2011, headquartered in Baku, comprising project operators nominated by participating Governments, and the work undertaken by the secretariat so far,

1. *Recognizes* that information and communications technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster economic growth, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will help to expedite the integration of all countries, particularly developing countries, into the global economy;

2. *Also recognizes* the immense potential that building connectivity can have in contributing to social progress, including in empowering women and youth and promoting social integration and tolerance;

3. *Stresses* the importance of strengthened and continued cooperation among all stakeholders to build and run information infrastructures in order to bridge the digital divide in the region, and encourages interested Member States to participate in the development of regional connectivity solutions;

4. *Invites* the international community, including Member States, international organizations, the private sector and civil society, to support efforts to improve global telecommunications connectivity, with a focus on countries with inadequate access to the international information and communications technologies backbone, by way of participation in such initiatives as the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway project;

5. *Recognizes* the need to build connectivity in the region to help to bridge the digital divide, and in this regard welcomes the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway project and the support provided thus far by all interested stakeholders;

6. *Also recognizes* the importance and potential of the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway project in supporting the improvement and diversification of telecommunications transit routes between Asia and Europe, and in this regard invites Member States to further support the project by encouraging, as appropriate, the participation of the public and private sectors;

7. *Takes note* of the proposal to establish the Eurasian Connectivity Alliance with the International Telecommunication Union, aimed at highlighting synergies among Governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and international development institutions towards improving the development of regional telecommunications transit routes utilizing innovative and cost-effective working methods without recourse to additional resources.

Draft resolution II
Information and communications technologies for development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 56/183 of 21 December 2001, 57/238 of 20 December 2002, 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, 59/220 of 22 December 2004, 60/252 of 27 March 2006, 62/182 of 19 December 2007, 63/202 of 19 December 2008, 64/187 of 21 December 2009, 65/141 of 20 December 2010 and 66/184 of 22 December 2011,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolutions 2006/46 of 28 July 2006, 2008/3 of 18 July 2008, 2009/7 of 24 July 2009, 2010/2 of 19 July 2010 and 2011/16 of 26 July 2011 on the assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, and taking note of Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/5 of 24 July 2012,

Recalling further the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003,[1] and endorsed by the General Assembly,[2] and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005,[3] and endorsed by the General Assembly,[4]

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[5]

Recalling also the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals and its outcome document,[6]

Recalling further the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, and its outcome document, entitled "The future we want",[7]

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels,[8]

Noting the organization of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2012 in Geneva from 14 to 18 May 2012,

Noting also the establishment of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development at the invitation of the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union and the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, taking note of "Broadband targets for 2015", which sets targets and makes recommendations for making broadband policy universal and for increasing affordability and uptake in support of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development

[1] See A/C.2/59/3, annex.
[2] See resolution 59/220.
[3] See A/60/687.
[4] See resolution 60/252.
[5] Resolution 60/1.
[6] Resolution 65/1.
[7] Resolution 66/288, annex.
[8] A/67/66-E/2012/49 and Add.1.

Goals, and acknowledging the report of the Broadband Commission, entitled "The state of broadband 2012: achieving digital inclusion for all", which provides the first-ever country-by-country evaluation of those targets and the state of broadband deployment worldwide,

Recognizing the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in assisting the Economic and Social Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up, in particular the review and assessment of the progress made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, while at the same time maintaining its original mandate on science and technology for development,

Noting the holding of the fifteenth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in Geneva from 21 to 25 May 2012,

Noting also that cultural diversity is the common heritage of humankind and that the information society should be founded on and stimulate respect for cultural identity, cultural and linguistic diversity, traditions and religions and foster dialogue among cultures and civilizations, and noting further that the promotion, affirmation and preservation of diverse cultural identities and languages, as reflected in relevant agreed United Nations documents, including the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,[9] will further enrich the information society,

Acknowledging the positive trends in the global connectivity and affordability of information and communications technologies, particularly the steady increase in Internet access to one third of the world's population, the rapid diffusion of mobile telephony, the increased availability of multilingual content and Internet addresses and the advent of new services and applications, including m-health, mobile transactions, e-government, e-education, e-business and developmental services, which offer great potential for the development of the information society,

Emphasizing, however, that in spite of recent progress, there remains an important digital divide, recognizing in this regard that only 24.4 per cent of the population in developing countries used the Internet in 2011, compared with 70.2 per cent in developed countries, and stressing the need to reduce the digital divide, including with regard to such issues as international interconnection charges for Internet use, and to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies, are available to all,

Reaffirming the need to harness the potential of information and communications technologies to promote the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, through sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development,

Expressing concern about the ongoing adverse impacts of the world financial and economic crisis on the positive trends in the diffusion of information and communications technologies and the investment needed to ensure universal access to those technologies,

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[9] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-first Session, Paris, 15 October-3 November 2001*, vol. 1 and corrigendum, *Resolutions*, chap. V, resolution 25, annex I.

Expressing concern also about the growing gap in broadband provision between developed and developing countries, as well as about the new dimensions that the digital divide has taken on,

Recognizing that the lack of capacity-building for the productive use of information and communications technologies needs to be addressed in order to overcome the digital divide,

Recognizing also that the number of Internet users is growing and that the digital divide is also changing in character from one based on whether access is available to one based on the quality of access, information and skills that users can obtain, and the value they can derive from it, and recognizing in this regard that there is a need to prioritize the use of information and communications technologies through innovative approaches, including multi-stakeholder approaches, within national and regional development strategies,

Reaffirming paragraphs 4, 5 and 55 of the Declaration of Principles adopted in Geneva in 2003, and recognizing that freedom of expression and the free flow of information, ideas and knowledge are essential for the information society and beneficial to development,

Conscious of the challenges faced by States, in particular developing countries, in combating cybercrime, and emphasizing the need to reinforce technical assistance and capacity-building activities for the prevention, prosecution and punishment of the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes,

Acknowledging that the Internet is a central element of the infrastructure of the information society and a global facility available to the public,

Recognizing that the international management of the Internet should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement of Governments, the private sector, civil society, academic and technical communities and international organizations, as stated in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society,

Recognizing also the importance of the Internet Governance Forum and its mandate as a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue on various matters, including public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance, in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet, as well as its role in building partnerships among different stakeholders, including through national and regional initiatives, so as to help in addressing the various issues of Internet governance, while acknowledging the calls for improvement in its working methods,

Recalling its decision that the desirability of the continuation of the Internet Governance Forum will be considered again by Member States in the General Assembly in the context of a ten-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2015,

Reiterating the significance and urgency of the process towards enhanced cooperation in full consistency with the mandate provided in the Tunis Agenda and the need for enhanced cooperation to enable Governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities in respect of international public policy

issues pertaining to the Internet but not in respect of the day-to-day technical and operational matters that have no impact on those issues,

Noting the holding of the open consultations on enhanced cooperation on public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, convened by the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in Geneva on 18 May 2012,

Reaffirming that the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society related to Internet governance, namely, the process towards enhanced cooperation and the convening of the Internet Governance Forum, are to be pursued by the Secretary-General through two distinct processes, and recognizing that the two processes may be complementary,

Reaffirming also paragraphs 35 to 37 and 67 to 72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society,

Welcoming the efforts undertaken by the host countries in organizing the meetings of the Internet Governance Forum, held in Athens in 2006, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2007, in Hyderabad, India, in 2008, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2009, in Vilnius in 2010, in Nairobi in 2011, and in Baku in 2012,

Recognizing the pivotal role of the United Nations system in promoting development, including with respect to enhancing access to information and communications technologies, inter alia, through partnerships with all relevant stakeholders,

Welcoming, in view of the existing gaps in information and communications technologies infrastructure, the Connect Africa summits held in Kigali in 2007 and in Cairo in 2008, the Connect the Commonwealth of Independent States summit held in Minsk in 2009, the meeting of Commonwealth countries held in Colombo in 2010, the first and second Digital Agenda Assembly of the European Union, held in 2011 and 2012, the Connect Americas summit held in Panama in 2012, the Connect Arab States summit held in Qatar in 2012, the annual European Dialogue on Internet Governance, the Mesoamerican Information Highway, and the Trans-Eurasian Information Superhighway projects, which are regional initiatives aimed at mobilizing human, financial and technical resources to accelerate the implementation of the connectivity goals of the World Summit on the Information Society,

Stressing the importance of strengthened and continued cooperation among all stakeholders and international cooperation to build and run regional and global information and communications technology infrastructure in order to contribute to bridging the digital divide,

1. *Recognizes* that information and communications technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will help to expedite the integration of all countries, especially developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, into the global economy;

2. *Also recognizes* the rapid growth in broadband access networks, especially in developed countries, and notes with concern that there is a growing

digital divide in the availability, affordability, quality of access and use of broadband between high-income countries and other regions, with the least developed countries and Africa, as a continent, lagging behind the rest of the world;

3. *Expresses concern* regarding the digital divide in access to information and communications technologies and broadband connectivity between countries at different levels of development, which affects many economically and socially relevant applications in areas such as government, business, health and education, and also expresses concern with regard to the special challenges faced in the area of broadband connectivity by developing countries, including the least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries;

4. *Acknowledges* that a gender divide exists as part of the digital divide, and encourages all stakeholders to ensure the full participation of women in the information society and women's access to and use of information and communications technologies for their overall empowerment and benefit, and in this regard recalls the agreed conclusions of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women;[10]

5. *Stresses* that, for the majority of the poor, the development promise of science and technology, including information and communications technologies, remains unfulfilled, and emphasizes the need to effectively harness technology, including information and communications technologies, to bridge the digital divide;

6. *Also stresses* the important role of Governments in the design of their national public policies and in the provision of public services responsive to national needs and priorities through, inter alia, the effective use of information and communications technologies, including on the basis of a multi-stakeholder approach, to support national development efforts;

7. *Recognizes* that, in addition to financing by the public sector, financing of information and communications technologies infrastructure by the private sector has come to play an important role in many countries and that domestic financing is being augmented by North-South flows and complemented by South-South cooperation, and also recognizes that South-South and triangular cooperation can be useful tools for promoting the development of information and communications technologies;

8. *Also recognizes* that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing the new technologies, such as insufficient resources, infrastructure, education, capacity, investment and connectivity and issues related to technology ownership, standards and flows, and in this regard calls upon all stakeholders to provide adequate resources, enhanced capacity-building and technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, to developing countries, particularly the least developed countries;

9. *Further recognizes* the immense potential that information and communications technologies have in promoting the transfer of technologies in a wide spectrum of socioeconomic activity;

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[10] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2011, Supplement No. 7* (E/2011/27-E/CN.6/2011/12), chap. I.

10. *Encourages* strengthened and continuing cooperation between and among stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva[1] and Tunis[3] phases of the World Summit on the Information Society through, inter alia, the promotion of national, regional and international multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships, and the promotion of national and regional multi-stakeholder thematic platforms in a joint effort and dialogue with developing countries, including the least developed countries, development partners and actors in the information and communications technologies sector;

11. *Reaffirms* the role of the General Assembly in the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, to be held by the end of 2015, as recognized in paragraph 111 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, and decides to consider the modalities for the review process by the end of 2013;

12. *Welcomes* the efforts undertaken by Tunisia, host of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Telecommunication Union and other relevant international and regional organizations, in organizing annually the ICT 4 All Forum and technological exhibition as a platform within the framework of the follow-up to the Summit to promote a dynamic business environment for the information and communications technologies sector worldwide;

13. *Notes* the progress that has been made by United Nations entities in cooperation with national Governments, regional commissions and other stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in the implementation of the action lines contained in the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society, and encourages the use of those action lines for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

14. *Also notes* the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional level, facilitated by the regional commissions, as observed in the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit at the regional and international levels;[8]

15. *Encourages* the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, within their respective mandates and strategic plans, to contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, and emphasizes the importance of adequate resources in this regard;

16. *Recognizes* the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology, and in this regard encourages the United Nations development system to continue its effort to promote the use of information and communications technologies as a critical enabler of development and a catalyst for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

17. *Also recognizes* the role of the United Nations Group on the Information Society as an inter-agency mechanism of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination designed to coordinate United Nations implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society;

18. *Takes note* of the report of the Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum,[11] and requests the Secretary-General to submit, as part of his annual reporting on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, information on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group, particularly on enhancing participation by developing countries;

19. *Stresses* the need for the enhanced participation of all developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in all Internet Governance Forum meetings, and in this regard invites Member States, as well as other stakeholders, to support the participation of Governments and all other stakeholders from developing countries in the Forum itself, as well as in the preparatory meetings;

20. *Invites* the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to establish a working group on enhanced cooperation to examine the mandate of the World Summit on the Information Society regarding enhanced cooperation as contained in the Tunis Agenda, through seeking, compiling and reviewing inputs from all Member States and all other stakeholders, and to make recommendations on how to fully implement this mandate; when convening the working group, the Chair should also take into consideration the meetings already scheduled on the calendar of the Commission, and the working group should report to the Commission at its seventeenth session, in 2014, as an input to the overall review of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society;

21. *Requests* the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to ensure that the working group on enhanced cooperation has balanced representation between Governments, from the five regional groups of the Commission, and invitees from all other stakeholders, namely, the private sector, civil society, technical and academic communities, and intergovernmental and international organizations, drawn equally from developing and developed countries;

22. *Urges* the international community in this regard to make voluntary contributions to the special trust fund established by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to support the review and assessment work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development regarding follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society;

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, through the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the Economic and Social Council, a report on the status of the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution, including on activities of the United Nations system, in particular relevant specialized agencies, related to the overall ten-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society, as part of his annual reporting on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit at the regional and international levels;

24. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-eighth session the item entitled "Information and communications technologies for development".

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[11] A/67/65-E/2012/48 and Corr.1.

21. The Second Committee also recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

Note by the Secretary-General on communication for development programmes in the United Nations system

The General Assembly decides to take note of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, on communication for development programmes in the United Nations system.[1]

[1] A/67/207.